

Success of Spanish Church on Display at Expolit

During a time of enormous change in the media world, one segment of the Christian publishing industry seems alive and well: the Spanish publishing market.

At least that's my impression after returning from Expolit, which is the Spanish-speaking publishing trade show. For the past 20 years it has been held in Miami; and this year attendance was up 20 percent over last year. For me, it was great to celebrate the 15th anniversary of our Casa Creación book imprint with a special service featuring Iris Delgado, author of *Satan, You Can't Have My Marriage*. Her book in English, *Satan, You Can't Have My Children*, was originally published in Spanish. The English version has taken off and sold more than 100,000 copies in less than a year. It's an indication to me that the Spanish segment of the church is increasingly influencing the wider church. Read our news story [here](#) about Expolit.

At this year's event I enjoyed the passion I observed and the positive feeling that things are going well and growing. A friend from Tennessee noted how different Expolit is when compared to the National Religious Broadcasters or the International Christian Retail Show, where there is an underlying sense that things are not going as well as they should.

I'm so proud of my Casa Creación team, starting with Tessie DeVore, who joined our staff 19 years ago, coming from publishing house Editorial Vida, which was located in the Miami area. She faithfully served in editorial positions until we decided to start a Spanish version of *Charisma*, first called *Carisma* (the Spanish spelling) and later changed to *Vida Cristiana* (meaning *Christian Life*).

Our first Spanish book 15 years ago was *Lo insensato de Dios* by Nola Warren, the mother of Marcos Witt (the well-known singer and minister from Houston). Now 15 years later our Spanish group has sold 6.5 million books, had many best-sellers and won many awards. This year they received a “Gold Award” for selling 100,000 copies of the Spanish version of John Eckhardt’s *Prayers That Rout Demons*. Tessie has done such a great job that she’s been promoted to head our entire book division and is now executive vice-president.

When Tessie asked me to speak at Expolit on Sunday, I told them that I see growth, passion and **Holy Spirit fire** in the Spanish church, which is now beginning to influence the wider Christian community. No one would have expected this, even a few years ago, when most Spanish churches were tiny storefronts. Today some of the largest and most influential churches are Hispanic, such as **El Rey Jesús**, pastored by **Guillermo Maldonado**. It is the largest church of any type in Miami.

In Florida it was the Hispanic church that helped us pass the marriage amendment in 2008 by 61.5 percent (putting marriage between one man and one woman into the Florida constitution). While some parts of the church seem to embrace compromise, the Spanish church preaches holiness. And it is giving us leaders like **Samuel Rodriguez**, who uses his platform as president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference to speak to the media, governmental leaders and the church about righteousness while also helping the church understand some of the issues it needs to grapple with such as the need for immigration reform.

In high school and college I studied Spanish. I can read it better than I can speak it. I’ve traveled the world including Latin America. But I never dreamed that the organization I was privileged to found would someday spawn one of the leading Spanish publishing houses. But the way our organization has grown has been to move through doors we believe God has

opened. I'm thankful He opened a door to the Spanish world to me. And we have great hopes for the future.

But to the leaders of the **Spanish church**, realize that to whom much is given much is required. And while you may have struggled for years, there are other temptations that come with success. Keep your eyes on Jesus and God can use you at a time we need a real revival in the church and in America.

Que Dios te bendiga.

Steve Strang, *publisher and founder of Charisma magazine, is an award-winning journalist, entrepreneur, businessman and author.*